

City Council Comments - February 18, 2025

Your City Council met for almost four hours to address a variety of celebratory and business agenda items.

After Mayor Thurman led the pledges to the United States and the State of Texas, Mayor Pro Tem Jones led the invocation to get the meeting started.

Mayor Thurman proclaimed the month of March 2025 as “American Red Cross Month” in Horseshoe Bay. President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued the first American Red Cross proclamation in 1943, and every President since has continued the tradition. It is celebrated to honor the Red Cross's humanitarian work, to recognize the volunteers who help the Red Cross, and to celebrate the people who help others in need. Mayor Thurman encouraged citizens to get involved and support the local chapter of the American Red Cross.

City Manager Jeff Koska introduced the city's newest team member: Police Officer Nick King. Nick comes to us from the Seattle Police department, where he was a patrol officer assigned to the downtown district for seven years. He moved to Texas in September 2023 and joined the Texas Army National Guard as a combat medic in January 2024. We all welcomed Nick to Horseshoe Bay!

Next, Finance Director Molly Jester recognized Beth Kuentz for her 5 years of service to the city. Beth is the city's Finance Supervisor and Municipal Court Administrator, so she stays very busy! Beth has brought over 30 years of experience to the City and is currently working to obtain the Level III Court Clerk Certification. Beth has obtained numerous other certifications and awards, such as the 2024 Municipal Traffic Safety Award for Excellence in Promoting Traffic Safety-Small Court category. Beth has been married for 40 years and has 2 children. We all thanked Beth for her outstanding service to Horseshoe Bay.

Another highlight for the Finance Department: they were awarded the Government Finance Officers' Association's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 8th year in a row. Horseshoe Bay is one of approximately 200 recipients of this prestigious award in the State of Texas, and one of 1,800 recipients in the US/Canada. The US has approximately 90,000 local government entities.

Fire Chief Doug Fowler recognized four of our HSB Firefighters who were recently deployed to assist other communities with major fires. Jason Blackmon and Jonathan Morrison were deployed to California to fight the Palisades Fire. They worked 24 hours on and 24 hours off for approximately 12 days. Their assignment included holding fire lines, mopping up the burn area 300 feet from control lines, responding to flare-ups, performing structure protection, and assisting Urban Search and Rescue when needed. Jason and Jonathan stated they enjoyed their deployment experience, worked very hard, got a little sleep, and were so incredibly proud to assist California in their efforts to control the wildfires. Firefighters Ben Miller and Carlos Almaguer deployed to Abilene on Sunday, February 2nd as part of a seven-unit group sent to assist the Texas Forest Service with several fires occurring near Abilene. Within 30 minutes of checking in Ben and Carlos were working to control fire lines on the flank in concert with aircraft dropping retardant at the head of the fire. These deployments are through the State of Texas Intrastate Mutual Aid System and all costs are reimbursed back to the city plus a 5% administrative fee. We are so proud of our HSB Fire Department!

Only one citizen spoke during public comment: Ken Bookout spoke regarding concerns he has had recently about lot mowing in Horseshoe Bay. Mayor Thurman thanked Mr. Bookout for his feedback and asked staff to follow up with him to make sure his concerns were addressed.

Llano County Commissioner Peter Jones and CARTS Community Engagement Director Dana Platt presented information on the Capital Area Rural Transportation System's (CARTS) new transit service, The Country Bus, that will be offered starting March 1, 2025. This service will transport citizens in Llano/Burnet counties to and from any location in their service area for no fee (Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Lee, Travis, and Williamson counties). Reservations can be made two weeks in advance, but at least 24 hours before needed. For more information, visit their website at www.ridecarts.com or call 512-478-7433. We are excited about this valuable new service for HSB citizens!

Next, the city's Transportation Advisory Committee presented an extensive report illustrating the tremendous amount of work they have accomplished for the city over the past few years. The 120-page report, prepared by Chair Kelly Kaatz, Mark Bloschock, Rhonda Kolar, Lee Larkin, Reuben Morgensteren, Crystal Barrington, and Rusty Stout, covers everything from safety improvements to shared use paths.

An ordinance requesting a zoning amendment for 45.1 acres located at the southeast corner of the intersection of FM 2147 and HWY 71 was the first public hearing item on the agenda. No one spoke. After considering this item in executive session, Council voted to deny the application because many aspects of the proposed development were out of character with the rest of the HSB community. Staff will be working with the applicant to improve the character of the project.

The second public hearing item was for a preliminary subdivision plat for Atten Hill at Summit Rock, which includes approximately 119.815 acres. The proposed development consists of 110 Lots, 92 of which are proposed as single-family residential lots with 18 common area lots within Zone 12 Summit Rock. Council voted to approve this preliminary plat and commented that it fits in well with HSB's desired large lots/low density type of development. No one spoke during the public hearing.

Under Business, Council approved a budget amendment, authorized the city to publish notice of its intention to issue certificates of obligation for infrastructure needs and street maintenance that were approved in the FY25 budget, and an addition to the city's personnel policies to guide the deployment of firefighters to outside communities and to comply with reimbursement requirements for deployment. Routine items were approved under the consent agenda.

City Manager Jeff Koska provided updates on the new City Center site, including a drone flyover video and explained additional costs for expanded street work and work to realign the Escondido service driveway to the City Center street for safety reasons may be required by TXDOT. Slab and related plumbing has begun on Fire Station 2. Koska also discussed how the city is addressing the reported noise from the wastewater plant, and made announcements about the coming arctic weather this week.

We hope everyone stays warm this week! Please join your City Council at their next meeting on March 18, 2025 at 3:00pm at city hall.